

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2347

As of April 21, 2009

Title: An act relating to the review of support payments.

Brief Description: Concerning the review of support payments.

Sponsors: Representative Kagi.

Brief History: Passed House: 4/20/09, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 4/22/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Michael Bezanson (786-7449)

Background: The Adoption Support Program assists families adopting children who have been in out-of-home care by providing ongoing financial and medical support to qualified children based on state and federal regulations.

To qualify for adoption support through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the child must:

- be less than 18 years of age when the DSHS and the adoptive parent have signed the Adoption Support Agreement;
- be legally free (birth parent's rights have been terminated);
- be residing in or likely to be placed in out-of-home care; and
- have special needs.

Adoptive parents of a child who qualifies for the Adoption Support Program are able to receive an adoption subsidy. The subsidy is a negotiated monthly cash payment provided to adoptive families to help cover some of the expenses involved in raising a child with special needs. The amount of the payment is based on the child's needs and the family's circumstances, jointly determined through the negotiation between the family and the DSHS, and must not exceed the amount the child would receive if the child were in a foster family home.

The DSHS is required to review adoption support agreements at least once every five years. Additionally, an adoptive parent that receives adoption support may request at any time, in writing, a review of the amount of payment or the level of continuing payments. The review

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is to take place no later than 30 days from the receipt of the request. As a result of the review, the DSHS may adjust support payments based upon changes in the needs of the child, the parent's income, resources, and expenses.

Summary of Bill: The requirement that the DSHS must conduct adoption support reviews every five years is removed. The adoptive parent may, at any time, make a written request for a review and receive a review no later than 30 days from the request.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which the bill passed.